

Haftarah - Parshat Be Shallach (Judges 4-4 to 5-31)

based on the translations of

Robert Alter, Aryeh Kaplan, Stone Edition Tanach, JPS, Jerusalem Bible, New King James Bible

modeled after the recording in *Navigating the Bible II*:

<https://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=2&chapter=4&verse=4&portion=18>

4:4 Now Deborah, a woman [who was a prophetess], [was the wife] of Lappidoth. [She it was] who judged Israel at that time.
5 [And it was her custom] to sit under a palm tree—“[The palm tree of Deborah]”—[that stood between] [the town of Ramah] and Beth El in the highlands of Ephraim. [And people would] [come up to her]—[the children of Israel]—for judgment.
6 [She issued a summons], calling for Barak [son of Abinoam], from Kedesh in Naphtali, and she said to him,
[Have you not been charged] | by YHWH [the God of Israel]: ”Go [and march up] to [Mount Tabor], and take [along with you] [all of ten] thousand men from the sons of Naphtali, and from the sons of Zebulun.
7 I shall draw down to you at the wadi—[the river bed at Kishon]—Sisera [captain of the army] of Jabin, with his chariots and his troops. [I will deliver him] [into your hand].”
8 Responding [to her], [Barak said], “If you go with me, [I will go], [but if you do not] [come along] [with me] I will not go.”
9 [And she said this], “[Indeed I will go]—I surely [will go with you]. However, [you must understand] that it will not be [for your own glory] in the course that you are taking, because into the hands of a woman will YHWH [deliver Sisera]. [And so she got up]—[Deborah arose]—and went with Balak to Kedesh.
10 And summoned by Balak were Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, [and he brought up] at his heels (“feet”): a full ten thousand men, and marching with him was Deborah.
11 Now Cheber the Kenite [had cut himself off] [from the Kenites], the descendents of Chobab, father-in-law of Moses. He had [pitched his tent] at the oak tree of Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.
12 [They reported] to Sisera that [he had gone up]—Barak son of Abinoam—[to Mount Tabor].
13 Then gathered Sisera [all of his chariots]—[all of] [nine hundred] chariots of iron, and all the men who were [with him], from Harosheth-goyim to the wadi Kishon.

4:14 [And she then said]—Deborah speaking to Barak—“[It is time to rise up!] Because this is the day [on which] [God delivers]—YHWH [will give Sisera] [into your hand]. [Has not YHWH gone out [before you]?”] [So he came down]—Barak [came down] [from Mount Tabor] [with a contingent] [of ten thousand troops]—[all these men] [following after him].

15 Then routed [by YHWH] were Sisera [and all of his chariots], [and all of his camp], [with the edge of the sword], before Barak. [And so he dismounted]—[Sisera jumped down] from his chariot, and he fled on foot.

16 [And as for Barak]—[he went in pursuit] after the chariots and after the army [as far as] Harosheth-goyim. [And they fell]: [the whole army] of Sisera, by the sword. [There did not remain] [even one].

17 But Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, [who was the wife] of Cheber the Kenite, because [there was peace] between Jabin [king of Hazar] [and the house] of Cheber the Kenite.

18 [And she came out]—[Jael came out from the tent] to meet with Sisera, and said [this to him], “[Do turn this way]—[my lord, do come in], [turn aside to me], [do not fear].” [He turned aside] [to her] [into the tent], [and she covered him] with a rug.

19 [Sisera then spoke] [these words to her]: “Let me drink, pray, a bit of water, as [I am thirsty].” [And so she opened] [an animal-skin] [bottle of milk]. [She let him drink], [and covered him].

20 And he [said to her], “[Stand right there] at the entrance [of the tent]. [If it should happen] that anyone comes, [and he inquires], [asking of you], ‘Is there here a man?’ [then say to him], ‘[There is not].’”

21 [Then she took]—Jael [the wife of Cheber]—one of the tent pegs, [and she then took up] a mallet [into her hand], [and came up] [to him] with stealth. [She then drove] [the tent peg] [through his temple], [and it sank] [into the ground], [for he had been asleep, exhausted]. [And so he died].

22 And [it happened that Barak] was in [pursuit of Sisera]. [And there came out] Jael [to meet him], [and she said] to him, “Come: [I will show you] [the very man] whom you [are looking for].” And so [he came to her], [and there he saw] Sisera, fallen—yes, dead, [the tent peg] [in his temple].

23 And humbled by *Elohim*—on that day—[was that king] Jabin [the king of Canaan], [there before] the children of Israel.

4:24 [And there came down] the hand [of *B'nei Yisrael*]—pressing down harder against Jabin [the king of Canaan] until completely destroyed was Jabin [king of Canaan].

5:1 Then sang Deborah and Barak [son of Abinoam], on that day, [this song]:

2* When loosed were the bonds in Israel, [when the call was answered] by the people, [blessed be] YHWH. *This pasuk follows Robert Alter

3 Listen, you kings! [Give ear], O princes. [Coming now from me], for YHWH, from me [comes a song].

”[I sing praises] to YHWH the God of Israel.

4 [When you, YHWH] [went forth] from Seir—[when you marched out] from the fields of Edom, the earth [surely trembled]; [the very heavens] [dripped rain]. [Yea, the clouds] [poured down water].

5 [The mountains melted] before YHWH—even [Mount Sinai]—[from the presence of] YHWH, the God of Israel.

6 [In the days] of Shamgar [son of Anath], in the days of Jael, deserted [were the highways].

[For those going forth] on the roads, [they had to walk] on byways, roundabout.

7 [There were no longer] [cities unwall]ed*; in Israel they ceased, until [you arose], Deborah: there rose up a mother in Israel. *acc. to Alter

8 They chose gods [that were new]. [At that time] war [was in the gates]. Sword [was not seen], nor spear, amid forty thousand in Israel.

9 [My heart goes out] [to the leaders] of Israel, [who answered the call] for the people. [Blessed be] YHWH.

10 [All you who do ride] on donkeys—on white asses—[who are the ones sitting] [upon royal cloths],

who walk the highways, [speak up now].

11 [Even louder] [that the sound of archers] gathered [by watering places], [there let them] recount the bounties* of YHWH: *Alter

His bounties for unwall]ed cities in Israel. [Then it was] they marched down to the gate—the people of YHWH.

12 [Awake now], awake O Deborah! Awake, awaken now, [break out in song].

[Rise up, O Barak], and lead your captives, [son of Abinoam].

13 Then [there came down] a remnant [from the mighty ones] of the people. [The people of YHWH] [came down] [amidst the warriors].

14 [And coming] [out of Ephraim]—their roots in Amalek—after you, O Benjamin, [with your forces].

And coming [out of Machir], [there came down] commanders, [and out of Zebulun] [there marched out] bearers of the marshall's staff.

5:15 The princes of Issachar [were with Deborah]. [As was Issachar], so was Barak—into the valley [he rushed forth] at his heels (“feet”).

[In the clans] of Reuben, great were the probings of their hearts.

16 Wherefore [did you remain], there [among the sheepfolds], listening to the pipes [amid the flocks]?

[In the clans] of Reuben, great were the probings of their hearts.

17 [As for Gilead]: beyond the Jordan he remained. [And of Dan we ask], “Why did he linger by the ships?”

[Next, Asher]: He stayed by the shore of the sea, [and by its inlets] [he did dwell].

18 Zebulun was a people risking [their very lives] unto death; [and Naphtali, too], [on the heights] [of the fields].

19 There came the kings, [and they fought]: then there fought the kings of Canaan at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo, yet spoils of silver, they did not take.

20 [From the heavens] they fought. The stars [in their courses] did battle with Sisera.

21 The wadi Kishon [swept them off]—that wadi so ancient, the wadi Kishon. March on, my soul, [with great strength]!

22 Then pounded [the hooves of the horses], [from the gallop]—the galloping of his steeds.

23 “Cursed [be Meroz]”: Thus said the angel of YHWH. “A curse, a curse, on its dwellers.

[For they] [did not come] to the aid of YHWH—to the help of YHWH, [amid the warriors].”

24 [Most blessed] among women [is Jael], the wife of Cheber the Kenite: among women in tents, [she is most blessed].

25 Water he asked for, and milk [she did give]. In a bowl that was precious, she brought to him curds.

26 Her hand—[to seize the tent peg], [she stretched out]: [her right hand], for the hammer—[the workmen’s mallet].

[She hammered] Sisera, and crushed his head. She pierced his temple, and shattered it.

27* Between her legs, he sank down and fell, [and lay there]. Between her legs, [he sank down] and fell.

And right [where he sank], [it is there] that he fell, destroyed. *Alter

28 Through the window, [a woman looks out] [and she lets out a moan]*—it was the mother of Sisera, [gazing through] [the window lattice], [asking, “Why is it] so delayed—his chariot, in coming? Why [do they tarry]—the hoofbeats of his chariot?”

29 The wisest of his ladies responded, [but she in fact] came back with an answer to herself:
 30 “Is it not they keep finding—[are they not] [dividing up the spoils]? A maiden—two maidens, for every soldier,
 spoil [of dyed stuff] going to Sisera, spoil of dyed stuff, embroidered. Two pieces of dyed stuff for the neck, as spoil.”
 31 [Therefore may it be], [that there perish] [all Your enemies], YHWH.
 [But may those] [who do love Him] be like the rising of the sun in its might.
 [end melody] And there was rest in the land for the next forty years.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)